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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AMCONGEN, Lagos, Nigeria

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

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SUBJECT: Fortnightly Newsletter - November 18 to December 1, 1951

POLITICAL

Results of Lagos Elections. Zik's NCNC Wins All Five Seats in Western House. Burning Question Is: Which Two Will Go on to Central House.

The big news of the fortnight was the sweeping election victory in which all five of the Lagos seats in the Western House were won by Azikiwe's party, the NCNC. Two of these men will eventually go to the Central legislature, according to the constitution. The all-important question is, of course: which two will go? There is certain to be much to-do in their selection later by action of the Western House. The AG, which claims a majority in the Western House, will stop at nothing to prevent Zik from being one of the two. However if Zik could persuade three of the five to withdraw, nothing could stop him from going to the House of Representatives, since two members thereof must be from Lagos. Zik's opposition says that elected NCNC'ers will not sign any loyalty pact to refuse to go to the Central House unless Zik is one of those to be sent.

It is quite generally agreed in NCNC circles that Zik should be one of those to go to the Central House. The NCNC will undoubtedly try to manoeuver in such a way that the Action Group will have no choice but to send him, but the burning question is which one of the remaining four will go with him.

The NCNC's sweeping victory in Lagos was forecast in the previous Fortnightly. Those elected, for five-year terms include: Dr. Nnamdi AZIKIWE, Dr. OLORUN-NIMBE (Mayor of Lagos), Mr. H. P. ADEBOLA, Prince Adeleke ADEDOYIN and Mr. T. O. S. BENSON. The largest number of votes was obtained by the Mayor, who received 12,875. Each of the others received over 12,000. It is quite significant that Dr. Azikiwe came out second, in number of votes cast.

Of the 23,800 qualified voters, in a city of 250,000 population, about 86% cast votes. On the whole, voting was orderly, honest, and peaceful.

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Only Benin, with three more seats in the Western House, remains to be heard from.

Zik Expresses View that NCNC Members, Elected to Regional Legislatures, Should Not Accept Ministerial Appointments

On his forty-seventh birthday, Zik threw something of a bombshell concerning possible posts as ministers for NCNC members elected to legislatures. To a newspaper reporter, who had asked him his views, Zik stated that his aim in trying to get majorities in the regional and central legislatures was firmly to intrench the NCNC people in a strategic position where they "could create deadlocks and paralyze the machinery of government, and thus rip the MacPherson Constitution to pieces and usher in a more democratic one". He added "this means that if we come to power, we shall not only refuse to be ministers, but we shall use our majority to prevent budgets from being passed, and force the Governor to use his veto power, and then turn around and portray him to the world as a totalitarian dictator. Under such a strategy, my being appointed a minister is entirely out of the question".

Many NCNC'ers hold a different view and covet ministerial appointments. Zik's birthday declaration seems to be fairly pointless if we can believe the AG who state that they already have 51 members of the Western House, a solid majority which might be able to rob Zik of any desire he may secretly have to head the Central Government. Although he has expressed contrary views, many believe that Zik in reality does desire to be a member of the Central House. If he did not reach the latter by the normal route, he might still turn the trick via the appointment route. If so, his would be one of the six appointments reserved to the Governor. He is also believed by many to desire ministerial appointment, and finally to become government leader in Nigeria similar to NKRUMAH on the Gold Coast.

Azikiwe to Become Professor

Zik's opposition says that he is now a frustrated individual who, having been forced to realize that during the next five years it will be impossible for him to be a member of the Central House, a minister, or head of government, is now proposing to become a schoolmaster. It seems that plans are afoot for building a college near Zik's Press, Ltd. While Zik may have hard sledding in the future, this reporting officer is not prepared to concede that he is finished by any means.

Action Group Says its Position Still Impregnable Notwithstanding Results of Lagos Elections

The AG says that in spite of its defeat in Lagos, and irrespective of Benin selections, stil to be made, they have a solid majority (51) in the Western House and have many plans "to man the ship for the next five years". The AG refers to the opposition as "the NCNC minority", and states that the decisive battles for the general election into the Western House were fought and won before the Lagos election. "The NCNC won the battle of Lagos, but AG won the war", according to AG.

Borrowing from Lincoln's famous address in an editorial, the AG president concludes with the ringing challenge to the British, "We shall never rest until we establish in this country a government of the people of Nigeria, by the people of Nigeria, and for the people of Nigeria, where there shall be freedom for all and life more abundant".

Statements of this character by politicians are popular with the masses.

Decision to Postpone Opening of Western House is Deeply Resented by Action Group

It seems to have been definitely decided by the Chief Commissioner of the Western Provinces to postpone the opening of the new Western House of Assembly from December 10, 1951, to mid-January, 1952, because of the fact that general elections in the Northern and Eastern Regions will not have been completed by the earlier date. In the constitution of the Central House, the Governor could not consider selections of only one regional legislature.

The AG feels that the additional month will give NCNC time to get in some dirty work by weaning over to its side some of those elected to the Western House under the AG banner, or as independents.

Political Complexions of Northern and Eastern Houses Remain Unclear

Although both NCNC and AG are claiming successes in the voting for these two houses, there is no way at present to determine which will be victorious in the end. It should be pointed out that, even after the regional legislatures meet and vote, no individual member is required to announce his allegiance as regards political parties.

NPC-NCNC Affiliation Suggestions Fail

Indefinite reports indicate that suggestions from within newly-formed (June) NPC to affiliate with the similarly-principled but older NCNC have been rejected. NPC General Secretary has said "there is no middle course. It is now either NPC, NCNC, or Action Group".

Post-Election Press Comment in Lagos

The Daily Service, press organ of the remnants of the Nigerian Youth Movement, has accused the NCNC of planning to wipe out the Egbe Omo Oduduwa and thus deprive the Yoruba tribe of one of its most popular political instruments. This statement is in line with the persistent charge of the Daily Service that the NCNC plans the emasculation of Nigeria's tribal political figures.

Neither the Action Group nor the NCNC have either the desire or the ability to work for and secure national unity, according to the Nigerian Statesman. The Action Group is characterized as being without vision and as without interest in the future of Nigeria as a whole. The NCNC party has plenty of inspiration and vision, but lacks organization, this paper says. These serious shortcomings of the leading political groups of Nigeria do not augur well for the future of the country. The Statesman hopes that these two parties can find a common ground in an effective struggle for the independence of Nigeria.

NPC leader Adewale THOMPSON has chastised both the Action Group and the NCNC for the minor incidents of violence which took place during the post-election celebrations of the victory of the NCNC in Lagos. In an editorial in The Nigerian People's Voice, Thompson reminded the people of Lagos that they could jeopardize the future of the whole country by reversion to such unruly tactics.

It might be noted that the press comments on the election results in Lagos were very uninspiring and none of them showed any particular depth of either interest in or understanding of the political implications of the balloting.

New Constitution Formally in Effect as of November 26, 1951

The so-called Richards Constitution for Nigeria became a part of past history on November 26, 1951, on which date the new constitution was proclaimed to be the effective law of the country in a declaration of the Government.

Lyttleton Reportedly Planning Trip to Nigeria

The local press has carried several comments to the effect that the new Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr. Oliver LYTTLETON, is planning a trip to Nigeria in the first half of 1952. Confirmation of these reports has not yet been announced, but there seems to be a considerable interest in the reported trip to the British West African areas.

Zik's Press Sedition Case Will be Heard in December Assizes

This case brought by the Government reported in last Fortnightly, will be heard during December. The alleged offense is contained in an editorial appearing in Zik's press entitled "Goodnight to Colonial Freedom", published October 27, 1951.

Foreign Leader Grantee, Adio-Moses, Publishes Unfavorable Comments on Return from U.S.

Even before this labor leader arrived back in Nigeria from his trip to the United States, he caused to be published two most unfavorable newspaper articles in Lagos. Describing the United States, he made such statements as: "Stiff and snobbish Washington, drenched in corruption and rotten to the bones", and "The South, bulwark of hate, prejudice and bigotry, -- good training ground for anti-whiteism". He says that he was "jimcrowed, scorned and insulted". These are only a few of the highly unfavorable comments he made about the U.S. whose guest he was, and who showed him every part of the U.S. (Reported earlier in despatch.)

ECONOMIC

Maiden Cruise of New Elder Dempster Line Passenger Vessel to West Africa

The new vessel "Aureol" made its first visit to Lagos on November 23, 1951. The boat will be quite suitable to the British West African trade, but is not at all a luxury liner. There is ample evidence that it was built under "austerity" British conditions, and that the builders took advantage of every opportunity to economize.

1952 Palm Oil Prices Set at 10% Over 1951

After a two-day meeting at Enugu, the Nigeria Oil Palm Produce Marketing Board and the Palm Produce Representative Committee announced that the palm oil purchase prices for 1952 will be 10%

higher than those of the 1951 buying season. The group also announced that the 1953 purchase price will not be lower than the 1951 level.

LABOR

No Agreement Reached Between Locomotive Drivers' Union and Railway Management

During the course of the past several months there have been held numerous conciliation talks between the two subject groups, as respects conversion of apprentices to permanent status, and salary increases, but without result. The Union has now threatened a "slow-down" strike, and the railway management has, in turn, threatened dismissal to any drivers who take part.

In Nigeria the railways form a particularly important link in the economic system, which could suffer considerably if a strike of any importance should take place.

Other railway workers have also declared that they would go on a slow-down strike in early December if their demands for re-grading employees and back pay are not met. The management has informed the workers that any slow-down would be considered as grounds for dismissal, and has, in fact, already fired 70 or 80 employees.

OTHER

Three Nigerians Win Fulbright Awards

Official announcement of the award of three Fulbright travel grants to Nigerian students for study in the United States appeared in the Nigerian Press the week of November 25.

The grants are made available through the Civil Service Commissioner's office, acting in behalf of the Chief Secretary to the Government. Applications are submitted to the U.S. Educational Commission in the United Kingdom which makes awards for all of the British Colonies.

The Nigerian grantees who are already studying in the U.S. are C. N. Isong, Iowa Wesleyan College - Education; L. O. Shoyinka, Swarthmore University - Electrical Engineering; and F. T. Essien, Oberlin College - Political Science.

Site for Eastern Region Radio Transmitter Selected

The site for the Eastern Regional seven and one-half kilowatt radio transmitter has now been finally decided by Mr. J. W. Murray,

Chief Engineer of the presently expanding Nigerian Broadcasting Service. It will be about one and one-half miles south of the Police Training Depot, Enugu, and approximately half a mile west of the Agbani Road.

It is understood that this seven and one-half kilowatt transmitter should result in very good reception in all parts of Eastern Nigeria and the Cameroons.

Some time will inevitably elapse before the station is in operation and the installation of equipment is expected to begin in about eighteen months. By that time cheap radio sets selling at about £8 should be available in Nigeria in large quantities.

A more powerful radio transmitter will come into operation from Lagos at the end of this month and this transmitter will again be substituted for an even more powerful one at about the same time as the Enugu transmitter is completed.

Prince Orizu in Trouble Again

A Nigerian, resident in Enugu, has obtained judgment against well known "Prince" Orizu in amount of £300, originally paid by plaintiff for a scholarship promised to plaintiff's son. The Prince, who was generally thought to be well-to-do, appears now to be in financial difficulties since another judgment was rendered against him in amount of £400 for back rent which he had failed to pay. Still another judgment was returned against Orizu when the Owa Combined Union was awarded £400 as repayment of a deposit which the Union made in 1948 to Orizu's ACAE on strength of promise which Orizu made that their student would be among the first to sail for studies in the United States in 1949.

Debate Over Egyptian Universities

Many Nigerian newspapers have picked up subject of Government notice discouraging Egyptian university scholarship awards to Nigerians. It is thought that the volume of literature now appearing in newspapers regarding qualifications of students awarded degrees by Egyptian universities is largely a space-filler. However, there is undoubtedly a connection between these articles and extreme nationalism and anti-British sympathy of these universities. Nationalistic expressions of Al Azhar University are fully reported in Lagos Press.

Alleged Passport Crime for Trial

Ex-Immigration Policeman, Yisa S. (or Ajayi) Busari was committed for trial at December Assizes in a hearing of November 20. Preliminary hearing amassed a great deal of evidence against

Busari and conviction seems likely barring major unforeseen developments. Charges remain forging of passport application forms, forging of passports and making false entries in passport register.

A. W. Childs
Consul General

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